

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 AGRE-00 ICA-11 L-03
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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
US MISSION GENEVA PROIORITY 948
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI PRIORITY
AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 6242

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, ICRC, CG
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH ICRC DELEGATE FREDERICK STEINEMAN

REF: A) STATE 150110; B) KINSHASA 6197; C) KINSHASA 5725;
D) KINSHASA 5435

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY AND USAID OFFICERS MET JUNE 5 WITH ICRC DELEGAT
E
FREDERICK STEINEMAN WHO HAS BEEN DIRECTING RED CROSS RELIEF EFFORTS
IN KOLWEZI. STEINEMAN BRIEFLY OUTLINED THE SITUATION IN KOLWEZI AS
HE FOUND IT ON MAY 22, WHEN HE ARRIVED IN THE CITY, AND THEN DESCRIB
ED
HIS ORGANIZATION'S EFFORTS TO ASSIST THE POPULATION THERE. THE
RED CROSS IS CURRENTLY PROVIDING FOOD AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, LOCATIN
G
THE MISSING, AIDING IN THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES SEPARATED BY
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THE FIGHTING AND IMPLEMENTING A LIMITED PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM, AS
WELL AS CARRYING OUT ITS TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD
PRISONERS OF WAR. STEINEMAN INDICATED THAT HE HAS OUTLINED TO HIS
HEADQUARTERS AN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COVERING A PERIOD OF 4 - 6 WEEKS
AND COSTING 500,000 SWISS FRANCS (\$950,000). END SUMMARY.

2. STEINEMAN BEGAN BY NOTING THAT AS THE ICRC DELEGATE IN LUSAKA,

AND THE NEAREST TO LUBUMBASHI, HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PROCEED TO SHABA ON THURSDAY, MAY 18, TO INVESTIGATE THE SITUATION. ARRIVING IN LUBUMBASHI ON MAY 19, THE SAME DAY AS THE FRENCH PARADROP, HE REACHED KOLWEZI ON MAY 22. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY 14 VOLUNTEERS FROM THE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS, ALL TRAINED IN FIRST AID. RADIO APPEALS FOR ZAIRIAN RED CROSS WORKERS TO VOLUNTEER HAD BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL AND 60 VOLUNTEERS WERE SOON FLOWN FROM KINSHASA IN A ZAIRIAN AIR FORCE BUFFALO TRANSPORT. STEINEMAN REVISED HIS INITIALLY NEGATIVE OPINION OF THE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS AFTER WORKING WITH THEM IN KOLWEZI. ALTHOUGH H THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WAS STILL A PROBLEM, HE FOUND THE WORKING LEVEL PEOPLE TO BE GOOD. MOST OF THE VOLUNTEERS HAD BEEN TRAINED IN FIRST AID AND SOME WERE MEDICAL ASSISTANTS. ALMOST ALL HAD BEEN TRAINED BY THE ZAIRIANS THEMSELVES, BASED UPON TRAINING ORIGINALLY GIVEN BY THE LEAGUE OF THE RED CROSS.

3. THEIR FIRST TASK WAS THE INTERMENT OF THE DEAD. BY JUNE 1 THEY HAD BURIED THE REMAINS OF 750 PEOPLE, INCLUDING 90 WHO HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AS EUROPEANS AND ANOTHER 40-50 WHO COULD NOT POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS TO RACE. IN EACH CASE THE CLOTHING AND LOCATION OF THE REMAINS WERE CAREFULLY RECORDED, ALTHOUGH STEINEMAN BELIEVES THAT MANY WILL NEVER BE IDENTIFIED. IN MANY INSTANCES THE REMAINS HAD BEEN PARTIALLY DEVoured BY DOGS. STEINEMAN ADDED THAT HE HAD ASKED THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PEOPLE TO TAKE OVER THIS TASK IN ORDER TO FREE RED CROSS PERSONNEL FOR THE RELIEF EFFORT. GENERAL SINGA HAD ALREADY ORDERED LOCAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH PERSONNEL TO WORK UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE RED CROSS, AND MONSIGNOR SONGASONGA HAD PROMISED TO PROVIDE ANY PEOPLE NEEDED (ALTHOUGH ALL OF THE EUROPEAN MISSIONARIES HAVE LEFT).

4. ON STEINEMAN'S FIRST DAY IN KOLWEZI HE WAS ASKED BY THREE ZAIRIAN

DOCTORS FROM THE CITY, A PEDIATRICIAN, AN ORTHOPEDIST AND A PUBLIC HEALTH SPECIALIST. SIX MORE ZAIRIAN DOCTORS FROM LUBUMBASHI VOLUNTEERED TO HELP, INCLUDING TWO SURGEONS, WHO WERE ESPECIALLY NEEDED. PRIOR TO THEIR ARRIVAL THE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED HAD BEEN FLOWN TO LUBUMBASHI FOR TREATMENT. THE DOCTORS TREATED 60 PEOPLE ON THE FIRST DAY. AT FIRST ALL WOUNDED AND INJURED WERE TAKEN TO MILITARY HEADQUARTERS FOR IDENTIFICATION BEFORE TREATMENT. HOWEVER, NOW THE RED CROSS LISTS THE NAMES OF ALL THOSE TRACED, SOME OF WHOM ARE CLEARLY REBELS, AND SUPPLIES THIS LIST TO THE MILITARY, WHILE THE INDIVIDUALS REMAIN IN THE HOSPITAL.

5. ALTHOUGH STRUCK BY LOOTERS, MOST OF THE GECAMINES
HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT AND PLANT WAS IN GOOD SHAPE SINCE AN ESTIMATED 300

REBEL CASUALTIES HAD BEEN TREATED THERE, ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTOR
OF THE HOSPITAL. WHILE SOME OF THE NURSING SISTERS HAD LEFT, OTHERS
HAD STAYED, INCLUDING 10 NURSES AND 15 MALE MEDICAL AIDES. CURRENTLY

THE HOSPITAL IS TREATING 65 WOUNDED AND 40 SICK. THE GOVERNMENT
HOSPITAL WAS STRIPPED BARE BY LOOTERS. MANY OF THE PREVIOUS PATIENTS
,
ESPECIALLY AMPUTEES WHO WERE CLEARLY FAZ SOLDIERS, HAD APPARENTLY
BEEN EXECUTED IN THEIR BEDS BY THE REBELS. THE RED CROSS HAS PROVIDE
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BLANKETS, SHEETS, MATTRESSES, ETC., AND THE DOCTORS HAVE RETURNED. T
HEY
ARE CURRENTLY BEING ASSISTED BY RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS. STEINEMAN HAS
ASKED HIS HEADQUARTERS IN GENEVA FOR DISPENSARY KITS, EACH CAPABLE
OF TREATING 200 SICK, AS WELL AS FIRST AID KITS FOR TREATING
THE WOUNDED. THE MAJOR PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN DIARRHEA AND
DEHYDRATION.

6. STEIENEMAN ALSO ESTABLISHED A TRACING AGENCY TO ASSIST IN
FINDING THE MISSING AND TO REUNITE FAMILIES SEPARATED BY THE FIGHTING
.
THEY ARE PREPARING A LIST OF THE MISSING, COMPARING IT WITH THEIR
INFORMATION ON THE DEAD, CONTACTING RELATIVES, ETC. THEY HAVE
ALREADY ESTABLISHED BRANCHES IN LIKASI, KAMINA, AND LUBUMBASHI.

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7. GENERAL SINGA HAS ASSURED THE RED CROSS THAT CAPTURED REBELS AND "OUTSIDERS" WILL BE TREATED AS PRISONERS OF WAR (POW) AND ARRESTED COLLABORATORS AS POLITICAL PRISONERS (PP). STEINEMAN HAS SOUGHT CONFIRMATION OF THIS FROM GENERAL BABIA, SINCE AS HE NOTED THE

QUESTION OF POWS IS COMPLICATED, AND IT IS THE DETAINING POWER WHICH DECLARES POW STATUS, NOT THE RED CROSS. HE ALSO UNDERSTOOD

THAT THE REBELS WERE TREATING THEIR HOSTAGES AS POWS. IN ANY CASE, GENERAL DIKUTA WANTS ALL POWS AND PPS OUT OF KOLWEZI AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND THEY WILL BE SORTED OUT IN LUBUMBASHI. STEINEMAN HAS ALREADY SEEN 152 PRISONERS SENT THERE AND IS CERTAIN THERE WILL BE MORE. HE WAS AWARE THAT FRENCH LEGIONAIRES WERE TURNING ALL ARRESTEES OVER TO THE ZAIRIANS, AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN SUBSTANTIAL ARRESTS BY THE ZAIRIANS. THIS SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT THE REBELS FREED THE INMATES OF THE LOCAL JAILS.

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8. STEINEMAN STATED THAT GENERALLY THERE HAS BEEN NO FOOD AVAILABLE IN THE CITE SINCE MAY 13. THE LOOTERS EMPTIED THE STORES AND THE SHOPKEEPERS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LEAVE THE CITY TO OBTAIN MORE. HOWEVER, GECAMINES HAS SUPPLIED 6 RAILWAY CARLOADS OF FOOD INCLUDING 2,000 SACKS OF CORNMEAL, 4 TONS OF SUGAR, MILK, BEANS AND TINNED FRUIT. THESE WERE LOADED IN LIKASI AND TURNED OVER TO THE RED CROSS. ON MAY 31, STEINEMAN WAS ABLE TO DELIVER THIS FOOD TO KOLWEZI AND BEGAN DISTRIBUTION ON JUNE 1. THESE SUPPLIES WERE NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO GECAMINES EMPLOYEES, WHO HAD BEEN SUPPLIED BY THE GECAMINES CANTEEN IN KOLWEZI DURING THE "WAR." RED CROSS TEAMS ARE NOW TAKING A "CENSUS" IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY WIDOWS, ORPHANS, THE HOMELESS, AND OTHERS MOST IN NEED OF THIS ASSISTANCE.

9. THE GECAMINES MILL WAS TO RESUME OPERATION ON JUNE 1 USING STOCKPILED SUPPLIES OF CORN. THIS MILL WOULD PROVIDE 200 - 300 SACKS OF CORNMEAL PER DAY FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE STORES IN KOLWEZI. MOST PEOPLE IN FACT HAVE MONEY BUT FOOD HAS NOT BEEN AVAILABLE TO BUY. (NOTE: THE GECAMINES PAYROLL WAS DISCOVERED INTACT, UNTOUCHED BY

EITHER THE REBELS OR LOOTERS, THUS ASSURING THAT AT LEAST THE GECAMINES EMPLOYEES WILL HAVE MONEY TO BUY FOOD.) THE CORNMEAL WILL BE SOLD FOR THE STANDARD CONTROLLED PRICE OF 16 ZAIRES PER SACK. THE RED CROSS HAS ALREADY PROVIDED SMALL QUANTITIES OF MILK AND SUGAR FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND GECAMINES HOSPITALS AS WELL AS FOR THE SMALL CHILDREN

AND ORPHANS. THEIR TEAMS ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF OUTLINING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FUTURE ASSISTANCE.

10. STEINEMAN NOTED THAT SO FAR THE ZAIRIANS IN LUBUMBASHI HAVE BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE. GENERAL SINGA IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN VERY RECEPTIVE TO RED CROSS EFFORTS AND HAS PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AIRCRAFT, AND LAISSEZ-PASSERS FOR TRAVEL AFTER CURFEW. THE ARMY HAD ALSO GRANTED PERMISSION TO ICRC TO HAVE A RADIO FOR DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH GENEVA, WHICH PREVIOUSLY HAD DEPENDED UPON TELEPHONE AND TELEX. ON JUNE 4 FOR EXAMPLE, STEINEMAN HAD HAD TO SEND HIS LIST OF NEEDS VIA JOHANNESBURG. HOWEVER, IN KOLWEZI GENERAL DIKUTA HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO SEE AND NOW REFUSES TO MEET ANY MORE CIVILIANS. IN ADDITION, THE LIEUTENANT COLONELS ACTING AS DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS HAVE ADDED ANOTHER LAYER TO THE LOCAL BUREAUCRACY. NEVERTHELESS, STEINEMAN DID GET TO SEE DIKUTA TO DISCUSS

THE POW QUESTION. EVEN THE ZAIRIAN SOLDIERS HAVE PRESENTED LITTLE OR NO PROBLEM FOR EITHER THE ICRC OR THE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS PERSONNEL, DESPITE STEINEMAN'S ORDER THAT NO RED CROSS VEHICLE COULD BE USED TO TRANSPORT ANY MILITARY PERSONNEL. SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN NO PROBLEMS, ABUSES, OR MISUSES OF SUPPLIES BY THE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS. THE POSSIBILITY OF CORRUPTION DOES EXIST IN THE PREPARATION OF THE LISTS OF THOSE TO BE AIDED IN THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, STEINEMAN HAS ESTABLISHED COMPLAINT OFFICES SO THAT ANY CHARGES CAN BE INVESTIGATED. OVERALL, HE SAID, THE PGORAM SEEMED TO BE WORKING.

11. THERE ARE NOW 168 ZAIRIAN VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN KOLWEZI INCLUDING 38 FROM CENTRAL ZAIRE. AT ONE POINT THERE HAD BEEN APPROXIMATELY 200 BUT THE ZAIRIAN RED CROSS HAD WANTED TO WITHDRAW SOME TO REDUCE THEIR COSTS. NOW ICRC IS PAYING HALF OF THEIR EXPENSES. IN ADDITION THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS AGREED TO PAY EACH VOLUNTEER A SMALL ALLOWANCE. STEINEMAN NOTED THAT HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED SOME 100,000 SWISS FRANCS (\$190,000) FOR THE LOCAL PURCHASE OF BLANKETS. ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED THAT THESE FUNDS WERE IN FACT OF US ORIGIN HE NOTED THAT THE ICRC MAINTAINS AN EMERGENCY FUND OF APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AMOUNT FOR JUST SUCH SITUATIONS. THE GOZ HAS ASKED THE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES IN THE COUNTRY TO DONATE 80,000 ZAIRES WORTH OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT HE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO GO TO MUTSHATSHA

TO INSPECT THE SITUATION THERE AS WELL.

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12. FOR THE TIME BEING THE RED CROSS ENVISONS ONLY A 4-6 WEEK 500,000 SWISS FRANC PROGRAM. HE HAS ALREADY ASKED GENEVA TO SEND A RELIEF SPECIALIST AND A TRACING AGENCY SPECIALIST. THIS WOULD MEAN THREE DELEGATES IN ALL, ALTHOUGH STEINEMAN INDICATED HE WOULD OPERATE FROM LUSAKA. THE NEED WAS GENERAL AND THE REAL DIFFICULTY WOULD BE IN GETTING THE GOODS AND SUPPLIES TO KOLWEZI. ONCE THEY WERE IN THE CITY, THE ICRC AND ZAIRIAN RED CROSS WOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE DISTRIBUTION.

13. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE FURTHER UPDATE OF SHABA RELIEF SITUATION BY

JUNE 16.
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Message Attributes

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